

The Commonwealth War Memorial in El Alamein



The front façade of the Memorial

A desert memorial to 11,945 Commonwealth soldiers and airmen killed in the Middle East was unveiled on the 24th of October 1954. On that day, Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery of El Alamein unveiled the memorial. Twelve years ago to-day he was commander in the historic stand which hurled back Marshall Erwin Rommel's invading Afrika Korps and turned the tide of war against Germany. Standing on land given by Egypt, the memorial is a 270 foot long cloister, forming the main entrance to the cemetery and bearing panes inscribed with the names of men who have no known graves.



The Memorial from the inside

Among Australian pilgrims was Chris. Campbell. 70 a retired contract labourer, New South Wales who lost four soldier sons. He said he was 'mighty proud' to have been selected to come and see first-hand the type of country over which his sons fought. With him on the pilgrim age were Mrs. N. P C Morris, of Konwick, Western Australia, Mrs. K. E. Hagan of Mordialloc, Victoria, and Mrs. H.I. Stoddart, of Manly, New South Wales.

Names inscribed on the Commonwealth Memorial

The memorial bore the names of men from Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan and the Colonies who died not only in the Western Desert, but in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Persia as well, and whose bodies were never found.

For the unveiling Lord Montgomery of Alamein stood on the roof of the flag draped memorial. Below him, standing in the blazing midday sun was a guard of honour of Australians in slouch, bats. New Zealanders with their bright red hat bands, kilted Sea forth Highlanders, tall Pakistanis, Canadians and South Africans.



The Commonwealth Cemetery as seen from the top (Roof) of the Memorial



ARIDO visit to El Alamein Memorial

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